ised compost units and training of farmers.

Examination of Annual Reports of Undertakings

1726. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the names of public sector undertakings, which are coming under the administrative control of the Ministry of Agriculture;

(b) whether the Ministry examines in details the annual reports of such undertakings and the audit reports and the comments of the auditors; and

(c) if so, what are the serious audit objections in the undertakings reports and what actions were taken by the Government in the reports for 1995-96 and 1996-97?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) There are two Public Sector Undertakings under the Administrative control of the Ministry of Agriculture, viz. National Seeds Corporation and State Farms Corporation of India.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No serious audit objections were

observed in the reports of National Seeds Corporation and State Farms Corporation of India for the financial years 1995-96 and 1996-97. Hence, question does not arise.

National Centre for Crop Forecast

1727. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to set up a National Centre for crop forecast in the country and if so, the details thereof;

(b) where this Centre is proposed to be set up; and

(c) how the Centre will help in stabilizing the prices of essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The Government has set up the National Crop Forecasting Centre (NCFC) in the Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen the process of decision making and management of agriculture sector. The NCFC has started functioning with effect from 3.12.98 with a small professional team, carved out of existing resources of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. To begin with the focus of tracking the crop prospects is prioritised to thirteen major crops viz. Rice, Wheat, Maize, Bajra, Tur Gram, Groundnut, Rapeseed & Mustard, Soyabean, Sugarcane, "Cotton, Potato and Onion.

The mandate for NCFC is to provide effective and unified institutional framework for the entire crop forecasting system involving data flow from different sources and its assimilation and analysis using state-of-the-art methods and techniques.

(c) The advance information on likely crop prospects would help the Government to take stock of emerging scenario of supply and availability of agricultural commodities. This in turn would facilitate decisions regarding export, import, market intervention etc. with a view to impart price stability, particularly of essential commodities.

Cashew- Cultivation

1728. SHRI J CHITHARANJAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had any schemes to help the cashew cultivation to cut down old and low yielding cashew trees and replant; and

(b) if so, what are the details of such schemes?